

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LENDING 00681 081328Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AGR-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00
DOTE-00 EB-07 FMC-01 INR-07 NSAE-00 CG-00 DLOS-09
OES-07 PM-04 H-01 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 /087 W
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R 081311Z JUN 77
FM AMCONSUL LENINGRAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3208
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: BAGB, EGEN, ETRN, UR, US
SUBJ: LENINGRAD PORT CONDITIONS

1. SUMMARY. LENINGRAD PORT IS BEGINNING TO SHOW FIRST
SIGNS OF MAJOR CONGESTION AND FIRST RAIL CAR SHORTAGES THIS YEAR
AS STEADY STREAM U.S. GRAIN SHIPS ARRIVE. DIVERSION GRAIN
SHIPS FROM BLACK SEA PORTS BECAUSE OF HOOF AND MOUTH DISEASE
REPORTED. BUNKERING FUEL IS AVAILABLE TO FOREIGN VESSELS BUT
ON CONDITIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. DISCUSSIONS WITH VARIOUS U.S. CAPTAINS IN PAST SEVERAL WEEKS
INDICATES THAT LENINGRAD PORT IS NOW FACING ITS FIRST MAJOR
CONGESTION CRUNCH THIS YEAR AS STEADY STREAM OF U.S. GRAIN
VESSELS ARRIVES. ZAPATA PATRIOT HAS JUST DEPARTED AFTER UN-
LOADING 33,000 TONS CORN AND AT PRESENT THE THOMAS M
(27,000 TONS CORN) AND BRADFORD ISLAND (31,000 TONS WHEAT) ARE
UNLOADING AT LENINGRAD'S TWO GRAIN UNLOADING PIERS. U.S.
GRAIN SHIPS ERNA ELIZABETH, BANNER, AND MOBILE ARROW ARE AT
ANCHOR AWAITING BERTHS.

3. CAPTAIN OF THOMAS M HAS HEARD THAT GRAIN SHIPS ARE BEING
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DIVERTED TO LENINGRAD AND OTHER NORTHERN PORTS DUE OUTBREAK OF
HOOF AND MOUTH DISEASE IN BLACK SEA AREA, BUT WE HAVE HEARD NO
CONFIRMATION OF THIS REPORT.

4. CAPTAINS CURRENTLY REPORT AVERAGE 16-17 DAY WAITING TIME
BEFORE MOVEMENT TO PIER FOR UNLOADING, BUT THERE IS FEELING
THAT THIS LIKELY TO ESCALATE IN NEAR FUTURE. GRAIN UNLOADING

THUS FAR HAS BEEN PROCEEDING AT EFFICIENT RATE OF 3,000-6,000 TONS A DAY. HOWEVER, CAPTAIN THOMAS M REPORTED JUNE 8 THAT HE IS NOW EXPERIENCING SPORADIC INTERRUPTIONS IN UNLOADING DUE UN-AVAILABILITY OF RAIL CARS. LENINGRAD PORT HAS NO GRAIN STORAGE FACILITIES AND SHIPMENT IS DIRECT TO MILLS, SOME OF WHICH LOCATED CONSIDERABLE DISTANCES AWAY. SHOULD SERIOUS RAIL CAR SHORTAGE DEVELOP, BACKUP TIME FOR U.S. SHIPS COULD QUICKLY ESCALATE TO DELAYS OF 30 DAYS AND UP, AS EXPERIENCED LAST YEAR.

5. RE WATER CONDITIONS, GRAIN PIER 39 IS CURRENTLY TAKING VESSELS WITH 34 FOOT DRAFT WHILE SHIPS DESTINED FOR GRAIN 19 ARE OFFLOADING GRAIN IN TO LIGHTERS UNTIL SHIP REACHES 32 FOOT DRAFT.

6. SOVIET BUNKERING FUEL, DENIED TO AT LEAST ONE U.S. SHIP LAST FALL, IS CURRENTLY AVAILABLE HERE. HOWEVER, ACCORDING TO ONLY U.S. CAPTAIN CURRENTLY AVAILING HIMSELF OF THIS SERVICE, UP TO ONE MONTH ADVANCE NOTICE IS REQUIRED; FUEL IS VERY LIGHT--ACTUALLY TOO LIGHT FOR USE BY SOME U.S. VESSELS--AND PORT AUTHORITIES ARE MAKING AVAILABLE ONLY SUFFICIENT AMOUNTS TO ENABLE VESSEL TO REACH HOLLAND.

7. THE THOMAS JEFFERSON, UNLOADING HEAVY MACHINERY, DOCKED WITH ONLY EIGHT DAYS DELAY. CAPTAIN MILDLY COMPLAINED THAT UNLOADING CREWS AND NUMBER OF CRANES WORKING WERE INADEQUATE AND UNLOADING TIME TOO SLOW; OTHERWISE, NO PROBLEMS WERE REPORTED. NEUBERT

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